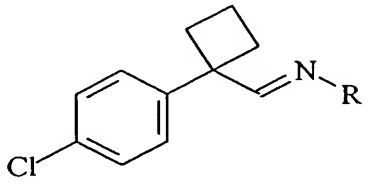
THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A tartarate, mandelate, or hydrochloride salt of (*R*)-desmethylsibutramine, (*S*)-desmethylsibutramine, (*R*)-didesmethylsibutramine, or (*S*)-didesmethylsibutramine.

2. A compound of the formula:

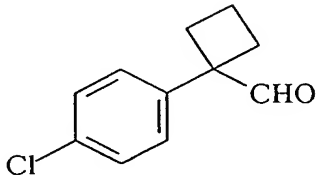


and pharmaceutically acceptable salts, solvates and clathrates thereof, wherein R is alkyl.

3. The compound of claim 2 wherein alkyl is C_1-C_6 alkyl.

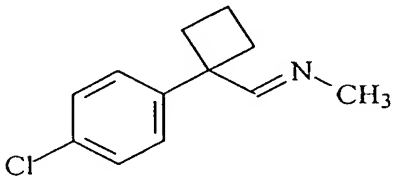
4. The compound of claim 3 wherein the C_1-C_6 alkyl is methyl.

5. A compound of the formula:



and pharmaceutically acceptable salts, solvates and clathrates thereof.

6. A method of preparing a compound of Formula 2:



2

which comprises contacting cyclobutanecarbonitrile with diisobutylaluminum hydride to form an intermediate; and reacting the intermediate with CH_3NH_2 at a temperature and for a time sufficient to form the compound of Formula 2.

7. A method of preparing racemic or optically pure desmethylsibutramine which comprises contacting a compound of Formula 2 with a compound of the formula AMX, wherein A is aryl, alkyl, or aralkyl, M is Li or Mg, and X is a halogen atom.

8. A method of preparing optically pure (*R*)-desmethylsibutramine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or clathrate thereof which comprises contacting racemic desmethylsibutramine with (*R*)-mandelic acid in a solvent which is or which comprises a mixture of ethyl acetate and heptane to form the (*R*)-mandelate salt of (*R*)-desmethylsibutramine.

9. A method of preparing optically pure (*S*)-desmethylsibutramine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or clathrate thereof which comprises contacting racemic desmethylsibutramine with (*S*)-mandelic acid in a solvent which is or which comprises a mixture of ethyl acetate and heptane to form the (*S*)-mandelate salt of (*S*)-desmethylsibutramine.

10. A method of preparing optically pure (*R*)-didesmethylsibutramine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or clathrate thereof which comprises contacting racemic didesmethylsibutramine with (*R*)-mandelic acid in a solvent which is or which comprises a mixture of acetonitrile and methanol to form the (*R*)-mandelate salt of (*R*)-didesmethylsibutramine.

11. A method of preparing optically pure (*S*)-didesmethylsibutramine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or clathrate thereof which comprises contacting racemic didesmethylsibutramine with (*S*)-mandelic acid in a solvent which is or which comprises a mixture of acetonitrile and methanol to form the (*S*)-mandelate salt of (*S*)-didesmethylsibutramine.

12. A method of treating or preventing neuropathic pain which comprises administering to a patient in need of such treatment or prevention a therapeutically or prophylactically effective amount of a racemic or optically pure sibutramine metabolite, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate, or clathrate thereof.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the neuropathic pain is diabetic peripheral neuropathy.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein the racemic or optically pure sibutramine metabolite is selected from the group consisting of (*R*)-desmethylsibutramine, (*S*)-desmethylsibutramine, (*R*)-didesmethylsibutramine, and (*S*)-didesmethylsibutramine.